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First Committee
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New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Osei (Ghana): The lot of being the first speaker in a meeting is to address a near-empty room, but someone must take the plunge.

Since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time during this session, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I have no doubt about your ability successfully to guide our deliberations, given your experience in the field of disarmament.

Although my Government has formally conveyed its warm congratulations to the United Nations and to the Secretary-General on their having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, allow me also, since I have the opportunity, to reiterate the warm sentiments that you, Mr. Chairman, have already conveyed to the Secretary-General on behalf of our Committee.

My delegation also appreciates the presentation made by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, a presentation which gave all of us a clear idea of the state of play in the field of disarmament — a crisis of multilateral disarmament diplomacy, as he put it.

Ghana also fully subscribes to the statement read by the delegation of South Africa on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, which highlighted the Movement's position on all relevant disarmament issues of concern to the Movement. I will therefore merely take the opportunity to underscore a number of points.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September will forever remain etched in our memory. They were brutal, horrifying and traumatizing, and indeed constituted a major threat to international peace and security. The Government of Ghana has already condemned the attack and expressed its condolences to the Government and the people of the United States. It has also pledged its cooperation and support in the fight against a phenomenon that is clearly global in its impact.

During the General Assembly debate of 3 October on "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", Ghana's Permanent Representative stressed that the fight against terrorism was beyond the scope and capacity of any single nation and that it required genuine cooperation on the part of all, at the national, regional and global levels. This recognition has already been affirmed by our heads of State and Government at the United Nations Millennium Summit last year. They decided

> "To take concerted action against international terrorism, and to accede as soon as possible to all the relevant international conventions." (*General Assembly resolution 55/2, para. 9*)

In that same Declaration, our political leaders resolved to strive to eliminate weapons of mass

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destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to reduce the global risks posed by small arms and landmines.

We therefore must accept that 11 September changed our lives and that therefore our attitudes towards negotiations on disarmament must change accordingly, in conformity with the commitment of our leaders. Naturally, the questions many have posed are, "Why did it happen? What can be done? What can we do?"

Here again let me make a point that was underscored by Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala during his presentation a few weeks ago:

> "Only history will decide how much of a defining moment 11 September will be. But history will certainly not absolve us for failing to learn the lessons of that unspeakable tragedy". (*A/C.1/56/PV.3*)

Against this background, my delegation believes that the role of the First Committee is pertinent to global efforts to curb terrorism through the monitoring and control of weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, we must all engage in the disarmament process with renewed vigour, guided by the collective will and commitment of our leaders, as they resolved last year, and also mindful of the danger of tarrying, only because of our unwillingness to compromise on preferences for weapons-based security rather than a collective security assured through the process of disarmament and non-proliferation of these weapons.

The terrorist attacks have highlighted our capacity to work with the utmost dispatch and ingenuity and mobilize at all levels to defend and neutralize any of these threats. If terrorist attacks can galvanize cooperation and coalition to counter further threats, similar leadership and initiative must be mustered in all aspects of the United Nations disarmament machinery. Such an approach should be adopted to overcome the inertia or stalemate in the disarmament institutions particularly in the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

We continue to recognize the Conference on Disarmament as the only forum for negotiations on disarmament, from which the non-nuclear-weapon States, like Ghana, expect a measure of leadership and responsibility. My delegation is therefore disappointed by the report of the President of the Conference on Disarmament that the Conference did not agree on a programme of work and did not establish any mechanisms on any of its specific agenda items in 2001.

We feel that the nuclear-weapon States must move away from strategic doctrinal differences and get on with the business of negotiations aimed at ridding the world of these destructive weapons. Whether the multilateral disarmament machinery becomes productive or, in the alternative, rusty and ineffective will largely depend on the willingness of these States to show commitment, accommodation and flexibility in the Conference on Disarmament.

In reaffirming our commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), we also uphold the conclusions of the 2000 Review Conference, and again call on the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate similar commitments to the Treaty through implementation of the 13 practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament.

In this regard, Ghana joins other States, particularly Malaysia, in reiterating the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice that States have a legal obligation not only to pursue, in good faith, negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, but also to bring such negotiations to an early conclusion. In our view, this obligation is certainly consistent with that undertaken by all States parties under article VI of the NPT.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones have made valuable contributions to non-proliferation and disarmament objectives. The Pelindaba Treaty, which Ghana subscribes to, and the Treaties of Rarotonga and Tlatelolco have demonstrated their relevance to the promotion of regional peace and security and to regional confidence-building. We therefore continue to support the establishment of similar arrangements in other regions, particularly Asia and the Middle East, albeit on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region, as prescribed under the United Nations Disarmament Commission guidelines.

For non-nuclear-weapon States like Ghana, the Disarmament Commission offers us a platform to participate in and influence the disarmament machinery through its recommendations on various problems in this field. We therefore take the opportunity to

commend its current programme on seeking ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament, and identifying practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. We believe any specific recommendations it makes on these items at its meeting next year would help move the multilateral process forward.

However, in addition to issues of nuclear disarmament, we must also focus on the stark reality of the impact of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and its destabilizing effect on life in developing countries. Ghana therefore welcomes the adoption of the consensus document on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. While the Conference did not meet all our expectations or agree on the need to prevent sales of arms to non-State actors or their stockpiling by civilians, Ghana considers the Programme of Action the beginning of a process, whose implementation at all levels would ultimately help address the outstanding matters. While efforts are under way at the national level to implement the Programme, we look forward to networking at the regional and international levels, especially with regard to technical cooperation to facilitate the implementation process.

The Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, which is based in Lomé, Togo, continues to provide substantive support to Governments, including Ghana, in various disarmament programmes, notably in the areas of peace, disarmament and security. Despite its invaluable support, it is plagued by financial and other operational difficulties due to the paucity of voluntary contributions. We will therefore continue to co-sponsor the draft resolution on the Centre, appealing to all States, as well as international and non-governmental organizations, to make contributions to promote the activities of the Centre.

We will also support the draft resolution on the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive waste, to be introduced by the delegation of Nigeria, as a reflection of concern about potential hazards that the dumping of such material would pose in our subregion.

In conclusion, Ghana reiterates that at the heart of the United Nations agenda for peace lies disarmament. Recognition must therefore be given to the positive contribution that the Department for Disarmament Affairs is playing in charting the path that enables the international community to move in that direction. It is our fervent hope that the Department, which is currently seeking a modest increase in its 2001-2003 biennium budget, will be provided with adequate resources to enable it to shoulder its burdens.

Mr. Muqaibil (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, at the outset, on behalf of my delegation, to express to you, Sir, our congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We are confident that you are capable of conducting the work of this Committee with much wisdom and skill in view of your experience in the field of diplomacy. My delegation takes this opportunity to assure you of our full cooperation in order to achieve the desired success. We express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his comprehensive statement on the issues of disarmament and international security and for the tireless efforts that he has made, along with his staff, in the service of dealing with the issues facing our world today, in the field of disarmament and strengthening international peace and stability.

My Government has been keen on supporting all the efforts made to maintain international peace and security. In that regard, my country has signed international treaties limiting weapons of mass destruction, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). It also recently signed a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as part of its commitments under the CTBT. My country believes that these agreements on the prohibition and destruction of weapons of mass destruction are essential elements to creating a more stable and safe world, so long as all Member States — and nuclear-weapon States in particular — commit themselves to their strict implementation.

My Government has condemned the terrorist attacks perpetrated against the United States and has called on the international community to make concerted efforts to eliminate completely all manifestations of terrorism. It has also supported the idea of convening an international conference on terrorism under the aegis of the United Nations in order to discuss this phenomenon and its roots and to develop a common definition for it.

Despite the international community's efforts to make the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, Israel remains the only State in the region not to have signed the NPT. Its failure to do so is an obstacle to achieving that dream. We call on Israel to accede to the Treaty and to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards and controls. We also support Egypt's proposal for turning the Middle East region into a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

With regard to the Indian Ocean region, an important cultural and vital waterway of which we are part, we look forward to making it an area of peace and security and mutual free trade through peaceful cooperation between countries, as exemplified by the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation. We also welcome all efforts to establish zones free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in all continents of the world, so as to eliminate tension and hotspots and establish peace throughout the world.

We have already welcomed the conclusions of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Traffic in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held in New York last July. The discussions at the Conference served to shed more light on the dangers of those weapons, their destructive effects on the lives of civilians, and the need to make international efforts to ban the illegal trade in them, while maintaining the legitimate right of States to self-defence as enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter.

In conclusion, I wish to mention the fact that the international community has a good opportunity to achieve success in the field of disarmament. It is therefore important to work together to achieve international peace and security in the world, which is in the interest of all the world's peoples.

Mr. Kim Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee. I am confident that under your able guidance our deliberations during this, the first year of the new century, will produce the desired results.

At the Millennium Summit and during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, last year, Member States expressed deep concern over emerging challenges to international security and unanimously committed themselves to building fair and durable peace in the world in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Nevertheless, today's security environment shows that the concern expressed has not been addressed at all and that humankind is preoccupied more with apprehensions than with optimism.

The commitment to nuclear disarmament by the major nuclear-weapon States has not yet been translated into action, and the demands of developing countries for nuclear disarmament and assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons have been disregarded. Global military expenditures are rising in a frightening manner every year, and the arms race is being further accelerated. The Conference on Disarmament continues to be at a deadlock, without any progress.

One of the serious challenges to global security today is the attempt to establish a national missile defence (NMD) system. A national missile defence system — a new version of "Star Wars" — is explicitly aimed at dominating the world by gaining absolute military and strategic superiority. It will inevitably cause an arms race, undermine the foundation of all international legal instruments in the field of arms control and nuclear non-proliferation and destroy the world's strategic stability.

What should be underlined is that the United States is using the so-called missile threat of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a pretext for its NMD system. There is no need to explain which countries are the real targets of NMD. Pointing a finger at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in order to work out a pretext to deploy NMD constitutes an open, direct challenge to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As long as the United States continues to provoke us with a view to pursuing the establishment of NMD, we cannot but take strong counter-measures in response to it. No country would tolerate an infringement upon its sovereignty, or arbitrary actions, contrary to the principles of the United Nations.

Another dark shadow looming over global security — and particularly over the security environment in Northeast Asia — is Japan's attempt to become a military Power and to revive militarism. On 29 August, Japan carried out a test-fire of a large-scale carrier rocket known as H-2A, which is easily

convertible into an intercontinental ballistic missile. Japan did not hide the fact that the rocket would be "exclusively used for a military purpose". Japanese authorities are now revising Japan's Law on the Self-Defence Forces, with the aim of paving the way for unrestricted overseas deployment of the Self-Defence Forces.

The fact that Japan — which has a large quantity of plutonium and sufficient high technology to manufacture tens of thousands of nuclear bombs at any time — test-fires a large-scale carrier rocket and revises its Law on Self-Defence Forces is clear proof that Japan is rushing headlong towards reviving militarism and achieving military power. What provokes serious concern is that Japan continues, in collaboration with the United States, to adhere to a policy hostile to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, while clamouring about a missile threat from us. The Japanese authorities even claimed that their recent test-fire of the rocket was to "cope with north Korea's missile".

The missile programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is peaceful in nature and therefore does not represent any threat to those countries which respect its sovereignty. The United States and Japan should not misjudge the stance of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea whereby it declared a moratorium on its satellite launches. Japan should bear in mind that it will pay a hundredfold for any reckless moves aimed at realizing its old dream.

As a result of its own historical experience, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea values peace more highly than any other people, and it is making every possible effort to ensure that there is peace on the Korean peninsula.

It is to the credit of the army-first policy advanced by respected General Kim Jong Il that, in the face of attempts by hostile forces to stifle the country by force, we were able firmly to defend the destiny of the country and the nation, push ahead with socialist economic construction and contribute to maintaining peace and security in the region.

In view of the prevailing circumstances, our army-first policy is very realistic and will enable us to defend the country and ensure peace on the Korean peninsula as well as to push forward economic construction through our own efforts. The vitality of the army-first policy is the result of the fact that our people are firmly safeguarding our sovereignty under arduous conditions, preventing war on the Korean peninsula and opening the way for peaceful reunification.

In order to bring about disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, and achieve durable and lasting peace and security in the world, it is necessary to put an end to power politics and actions of intervention based on the cold-war mentality. Today, all the destabilizing factors in the field of international security are the result of a cold-war mentality, the pursuit of arbitrary power politics and intervention in the internal affairs of others.

The unstable situation that is still prevailing on the Korean peninsula is the product of the cold war policies pursued by hostile forces. Peace cannot be achieved by the efforts of only one side; nor is it for the benefit of only one side.

The major nuclear-weapon States should put their commitment to nuclear-weapons reduction into practice and contribute to attaining durable peace and security in the world. It is very important that the central role of the United Nations be enhanced in the field of disarmament and international security.

In its work, the United Nations should address all issues pertaining to global disarmament and pay full attention to accelerating the process of nuclear disarmament, an overriding disarmament issue. In this connection, we fervently hope for early agreement on convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

My delegation wishes to conclude by making clear once again its position on the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. The so-called nuclear issue originated from the sinister aim of stifling our country in the context of the international political situation that prevailed in the early 1990s, and is, in essence, the product of the hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The issue of implementing the safeguards agreement will automatically be resolved when the hostility in relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America has been eased and the Agreed Framework between the two countries has been implemented.

In this regard, my delegation would like to refer to the statement made by the representative of Belgium, speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU), during a meeting of the Committee on 8 October. It is the expectation of my delegation that my earlier explanation of the so-called nuclear issue in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will help the EU, which has been repeating stereotyped and inappropriate arguments, to gain a correct understanding of the issue.

Mr. Botnaru (Republic of Moldova): I should like at the outset to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau, on your well-deserved election. I am confident that, with your diplomatic skill, you will guide our current deliberations to a successful conclusion.

I should also like to express the appreciation of our delegation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, for his comprehensive opening statement.

Despite the efforts made and the positive results achieved within various international forums in recent years, disarmament and non-proliferation continue to be priority goals that must approached in a more vigorous way. As the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, stated in his message to the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency,

> "Making progress in the areas of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament is more important than ever in the aftermath of [the] appalling terrorist attack on the United States."

Undoubtedly, those tragic events have highlighted the urgency of addressing the new and complex security challenges that confront the international community at the beginning of this century. My delegation shares the view expressed by many previous speakers that the present international situation requires a broad examination of disarmament issues and their relationship to peace and international security, as well a high level of international cooperation in the disarmament field. From this perspective, we firmly believe that the Conference on Disarmament, the First Committee and other multilateral forums must intensify their efforts aimed at preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, strengthening multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation instruments and eliminating weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons.

In this connection, my delegation reiterates its call for overcoming the stagnation in negotiations on the relevant treaties supporting nuclear non-proliferation, and for developing more constructive attitudes within the Conference on Disarmament. In our opinion, that would create a favourable basis for a more active disarmament process, which should lead to the adoption of implementable and verifiable nuclear disarmament measures in the future.

In our view, further progress towards the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the START II Treaty, the progressive and full implementation of the decisions of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the preservation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the successful conclusion of negotiations on the protocol to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, and the strengthening of efforts to cope with missile proliferation, as well as universal adherence to all agreements relating to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction — all these are also essential elements to this end.

In the field of conventional arms, my country fully supports the efforts of the international community to strengthen the multilateral legal instruments aimed at reducing the suffering of combatants and civilians in armed conflict. On the basis on this conviction, last year the Republic of Moldova ratified the Ottawa Convention on anti-personal landmines, as well as the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and gave its consent to be bound by three of its Protocols — Protocols I, III and IV. Furthermore, this year our Parliament ratified Protocol II, as amended on 3 May 1996. The forthcoming CCW Review Conference will no doubt provide a good opportunity for stocktaking with regard to the different Protocols.

Likewise, we support the measures that contribute to greater transparency and confidence-building between States. In this regard, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures are useful tools. With a view to achieving universal participation, this year my country provided the requested data and information on military

expenditures and on conventional arms imports and exports, and it will continue to do so in the future.

From the same perspective, my country has fully supported the regional initiatives to improve controls over the excess stockpiling or illicit sale of a diverse array of conventional arms. We welcomed the successful adaptation in 1999 of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, which represents an important contribution to European security. As a result, tens of thousand of pieces of treaty-limited equipment have been destroyed in our region under the CFE Treaty and its associated documents.

In this connection, I would like to emphasize that my Government is encouraged by the recent efforts of the Russian Federation to reduce its CFE treaty-limited equipment located in the Transdniestrian region of our country. Given the considerable progress that has already been made, we certainly hope that the process of the destruction or the removal of foreign combat weaponry will be completed before the ministerial meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to be held in Bucharest this December. In this context, I would like also to express our gratitude to those members of the OSCE that are contributing financially to the Voluntary Fund established in accordance with the Istanbul decisions to assist the process of weapon destruction or withdrawal.

The adoption by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects of a Programme of Action aimed at combating the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons was a welcome development. We believe that the full implementation of all the measures it contains will certainly facilitate the ongoing efforts to achieve the peaceful settlement of many conflicts around the world, including in the Transdniestrian region of my country, controlled by a separatist regime, a region that is, unfortunately, known for its illegal production of and illicit trafficking in various types of armaments, including small arms and light weapons.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the Republic of Moldova will continue to constructively cooperate in the search for solutions that may arise in the area of disarmament, and, with that in mind, my delegation is ready to contribute as best it can to the success of present session of the First Committee.

Mr. Ngoh Ngoh (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to begin, Sir, by expressing the delegation of Cameroon's heartfelt congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Your election honours your country, Hungary, with which Cameroon has excellent relations. It also bears witness to the great appreciation of your wealth of experience and great diplomatic skill. My delegation has no doubt that under your leadership our work will be crowned with success. I assure you of our fullest support and cooperation in carrying out your work.

We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We express our appreciation for the remarkable work accomplished by your predecessor, Ambassador Mya Than, during the fifty-fifth session. Finally, we wish to thank Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala for his efforts and particularly for his pertinent remarks at the opening of our work.

The loathsome terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001 deeply shocked the entire world. The Government and the people of Cameroon, through President Paul Biya, firmly condemned these indescribable acts. My delegation reiterates this condemnation. It also expresses to the American Government and people, as well as to the families of the victims, its most heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathy.

My country finds in these sad events the opportunity to renew with increased determination its commitment to join the rest of the international community in a merciless fight against terrorism.

Recent developments in the area of disarmament and international security do not particularly inspire optimism. Once again, we must deplore the increase in disarmament expenditures in the world, estimated at over $800 billion in 2000.

In the nuclear field, last year's promising trends have not been confirmed. The hope born of the encouraging results of the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in May 2000, and the commitments made by the world's heads of State and Government at the Millennium Summit, particularly on nuclear disarmament, still have not been followed up with concrete action.

The picture appears more sombre still. The States parties to the NPT had committed themselves at the Review Conference to proceed to the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. They also agreed to pursue a series of measures to achieve nuclear disarmament and the maintenance of strategic stability, particularly through greater transparency, an additional reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons and reduced priority for nuclear weapons in defence policies. What has actually happened? These commitments have basically remained a dead letter. Moreover, disarmament negotiations have been marking time, to such an extent that the United Nations Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters has been able to speak about the crisis of multilateral diplomacy in the area of disarmament.

The Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, has this year again failed to reach agreement on a programme of work, particularly on launching negotiations on a treaty banning weapons-grade fissile material. Furthermore, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has still not entered into force. Of the 44 States whose ratification is required for the Treaty's entry into force, only 31 have deposited their instruments for ratification. Finally, the uncertainty over the state of strategic relations between the main nuclear-weapons Powers and the stability of agreements in this area have become matters of great concern to the international community.

The situation regarding other weapons of mass destruction is no better. In July 2001 the negotiations held in Geneva on a verification protocol designed to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) came to nothing. Despite some progress, strong differences persist regarding field visits, transfers and exports control.

The work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons continues to encounter many difficulties, such as the disappointing results of programmes for the destruction of chemical-weapon stocks, the reluctance of some States to honour the declaration and transparency obligation and lack of cooperation. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction has entered into force, but it is far from being universal.

The existence of great quantities of weapons of mass destruction weigh on humankind with their horrifying risk of annihilation. The terrorist threats against which the international community is currently mobilizing shed a new light on the reality of such a risk; it has moved from the realm of speculation into our daily lives. Only the total elimination and complete ban of weapons of mass destruction will be able to really protect humankind from the horrifying risk of their being used.

My country therefore strongly calls on States to act rapidly on the commitments they made during the NPT Review Conference and the Millennium Summit. We appeal to States that have not yet done so to accede to the various international conventions prohibiting weapons of mass destruction in order to ensure their entry into force and universal adhesion. We call for the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to be convened soon; it had originally been scheduled for 25 to 27 September 2001 in New York. Meanwhile, it is fundamental that the current moratorium on nuclear testing continue to be respected. The conclusion of a legally binding agreement on the cut-off of fissile materials is one of the goals of greatest priority that the international community must set for itself in this domain. My delegation hopes that the Conference on Disarmament will be able to reach a consensus on its programme of work during the next session. It is time States demonstrated their political will on this subject. There is no longer time for procrastination.

The notable lack of progress on the subject of weapons of mass destruction is by no means the only reason for the international community's concern in questions of disarmament. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the devastation they cause in many parts of the world are increasingly drawing the attention of the international community. The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held from 9 to 20 July 2001 in New York, marked the end of a long process of increasing awareness of the deadly and destructive effects of light weapons and was the starting point of a large mobilization of the various actors of the international community — States, international organization, regional organizations and civil society — in the fight against this scourge. Despite strenuous efforts, the Conference unfortunately did not reach a consensus on the question of

controlling the possession by individuals of light weapons produced for military purposes, nor on the sale and transfer of such weapons to non-State entities.

Cameroon is still persuaded that progress is necessary on this issue. We are all the more convinced of it because the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference stressed the links between the illicit trade in light weapons and terrorist activities. The Programme of Action anticipated concrete measures on the international, regional and global levels to prevent, curb and eliminate the illicit trade in small arms. It also established a framework for cooperation involving the various actors of the international community in this fight. My country welcomes this. It is also pleased with the commitments made by the various countries that participated in the Conference to implement the Programme of Action in good faith. That gives real reason for hope for the countries and peoples suffering daily from the devastation caused by light weapons.

Cameroon attaches special importance to the efforts for disarmament and to the establishment of confidence-building measures on the regional level. The regional organizations and the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament play in this respect an appreciable role deserving of all the international community's support. My country welcomes the efforts made in this regard by the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, based in Lomé. However, the Centre still encounters serious financial difficulties that prevent it from being fully operational. Cameroon calls on the international community to contribute to the special trust fund created for the strengthening of the activities of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa.

The United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, created by the Secretary-General in 1992, deserves similar support from the international community. Since its creation, the Committee has earned a reputation for its worthy efforts towards peace and security in Central Africa, particularly by establishing confidence-building measures and promoting cooperation in security matters among the countries in the subregion. Under its aegis, the Non-Aggression Pact and the Mutual Assistance Pact among the countries of Central Africa were concluded, and the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) was created. We wish to thank the Secretary-General and, in particular, the Department for Disarmament Affairs for the considerable support they have unceasingly extended to the activities of the Standing Advisory Committee. We also appeal to the international community for more substantial contributions to the special trust fund for the Committee, so that it can effectively implement its programme of action.

The work of our Committee dedicated to international peace and security assumes special importance in the fifty-sixth session. My country is ready, as in the past, to make a constructive contribution in collaboration with the other States.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): At the outset, I would like to extend my congratulations to you, and to the members of the Bureau, upon your election to the chairmanship of the Committee.

For the last decades, the main and ultimate objectives of the disarmament process have been viewed as the total elimination of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, and a significant reduction in conventional weapons. However, right now we are facing another difficult challenge. International terrorism has quickly risen to the top of the international security agenda.

It is our conviction that it is well within the purview of this Committee to consider measures aimed at preventing and removing threats to peace and security emanating from sub-State-level terrorist and extremist entities. In this regard, we believe that United Nations can play a significant role through its existing mechanisms, including those of arms control. We would like to commend the actions undertaken by the Secretary-General to direct the efforts of Member States and whole system of the United Nations in the fight against this plague of the twenty-first century.

However, the effectiveness of the concerted actions in this area must be strengthened by each and every State by adopting the necessary measures at the national, regional and international levels. As was rightly stated by the Secretary-General in his address during the debate on measures to eliminate international terrorism,

> "The task now is to build on that wave of human solidarity — to ensure that the momentum is not lost, to develop a broad, comprehensive and above all sustained strategy to combat terrorism and eradicate it from our world." (*A/56/PV.12*)

Armenia has always supported all multilateral agreements and practical steps aimed at prohibiting weapons of mass destruction and reducing nuclear danger. We view the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as almost a universal tool to advance nuclear disarmament. The outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in which the nuclear-weapon States agreed to an "unequivocal undertaking" to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, proved that the NPT is the main and most effective legal basis for actions to prohibit and to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is one of the major achievements for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. With its growing list of signatories and ratifications, the Treaty became a main international tool against further nuclear testing. We hope that despite the postponement of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, all countries will spare no time and effort in order to free their respective regions and the whole world from the threat of nuclear violence.

The 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) constitutes an important cornerstone of the existing disarmament framework and has direct bearings on international security. Although we understand that national missile defence is a direct response to the ever-increasing threat posed by missile proliferation, we also tend to share the position of many States that every effort should be made to maintain global strategic balance and stability. We believe that the deployment of such a system will endanger the whole process of nuclear disarmament and will send a wrong signal to other disarmament regimes. We would also welcome a non-conflict adaptation of the ABM Treaty, taking due account of the interests of all parties concerned and the problems that emerge in connection with the proliferation of missiles and missile technologies, as well as weapons of mass destruction.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an important element of the overall process of nuclear disarmament. We support the establishment of such zones, provided that, in accordance with the guidelines adopted by the Disarmament Commission, they have been freely arrived at among all States of the regions concerned. Armenia will support any new proposal for the establishment of such zones when a consensus is reached among concerned States. We strongly believe that such a consensus must be reached prior to seeking international consideration.

During recent decades, the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons has constituted a serious threat to international peace and security. Armenia has declared the combating of small arms proliferation a priority for its national security. Over the past few years, we have been actively working with our international partners to adopt relevant national export control legislation and to strengthen border control.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects marked important progress in international action to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We believe that, in order to encourage and to strengthen the global approach to the problem of the proliferation of small arms, the international community should take advantage of the documents adopted at the Conference.

The recent terrorist attacks focused the attention of the international community on the complex challenge of chemical and biological terrorism. This threat is a challenge that can be met only through political will and the necessary resources. The international community must do its utmost to strengthen the existing tools in this area.

After the entry into force on 29 April 1997 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, the effective operation of a complex verification mechanism and modalities was launched. The effective verification activities of the Convention must serve as a good example for other arms control regimes.

The recent tragic events give utmost priority to our efforts aimed at countering the proliferation and at achieving the earliest possible elimination of biological and chemical weapons. An effective protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention remains a high priority for us. This will require a substantive, high-level political commitment on the part of all those involved in the negotiations to develop a robust compliance regime that reinforces the global norm against biological weapons.

The problem of landmines constitutes a great threat to political and social stability. The Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the total ban agreed in Oslo as a part of Ottawa process made a significant difference in this area. But, as we have stated before, Armenia's full participation in the Ottawa Convention is contingent upon a similar level of political commitment by the other States in the region.

Finally Armenia considers the Conference on Disarmament to be the forum for negotiating global disarmament instruments. The successful negotiation of the CTBT is a clear example of the Conference's ability to work out global instruments aimed at strengthening international peace and security. As a sign of our commitment to the principles of disarmament, Armenia has applied for full membership in the Conference. We hope that the current impasse on the issue of a fissile material cut-off treaty can be overcome and that the Conference will simultaneously start negotiations on a ban on the transfer of anti-personnel landmines.

Mr. Cengizer (Turkey): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee. I am confident that, under your able stewardship, the Committee will be successfully guided through its challenging agenda.

The carnage that the United States and our civilization was subjected to on 11 September was beyond any description. I would like to take this opportunity to express my nation's deepest feelings of sympathy and condolences to the people and the Government of the United States. The United States is a very close friend and ally of Turkey. Yet, as far as terrorism is concerned, I have to say that there is something more to this relationship. Through the tumultuous years of our fight against terrorism, the United States always stood by Turkey, at times alone. Now, in its hour of need, Turkey firmly stands by the United States.

The events of 11 September showed once more the necessity of considering disarmament and non-proliferation on a multilateral and general basis in order to prevent terrorists and their organizations from having any access whatsoever to more powerful means.

Turkey perceives the arms control and disarmament process as a significant dimension of its national security policy. As a corollary, we attach great importance to fulfilling the obligations emanating from international agreements and arrangements. We are committed to the goal of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. This goal should be pursued with realism through a balanced approach encompassing steps relating to nuclear and conventional arms alike.

In the field of conventional arms control, Turkey attaches utmost importance to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), which continues to play a vital role in the European security architecture and to make an indispensable contribution to security and stability in its area of application and even beyond. As such, it is rightly referred to as a cornerstone of European security. Since its entry into force, the impact of the Treaty on the security landscape has been remarkable and impressive. Almost two years ago, the States parties concluded successfully a long and arduous process to adapt the Treaty to new circumstances. Turkey took active part in and contributed to the adaptation process, which culminated in the signing of the Agreement on Adaptation that we had honour to host in Istanbul. We believe that the Treaty in its new form, which will come into force after ratification by 30 States parties, will further enhance and ensure the continuing viability of security and stability in Europe. Likewise, we attach importance to the timely entry into force of the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty signed in Istanbul. To this end, we expect all the States parties to work for the creation of the conditions necessary for the ratification of this Agreement. Pending the entry into force of the adaptation Agreement, full compliance with the existing CFE and its associated documents is of vital importance.

Turkey considers confidence- and security-building measures as elements complementing disarmament efforts at the bilateral and multilateral levels. In this context, the Vienna Document constitutes an important confidence- and security-building measure instrument, contributing effectively to security and stability in the area of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Mindful of the serious threat posed to international peace and security by the illicit small arms trade and of the destabilizing impact of the illegal

transfer of such weapons at the regional level, we attach importance to and participate actively in efforts to control small arms and light weapons, which are not yet covered by multilateral disarmament arrangements. The illicit flow of such weapons to criminals, terrorist groups and drug traffickers is of particular concern to Turkey and the prevention of such transfers is amongst its security policy priorities. Given the fact that more than 90 per cent of the victims of small arms and light weapons are civilians, the use of such weapons remains a growing humanitarian preoccupation. We believe that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 9 to 20 July 2001, provided a good opportunity to consider effective ways of combating the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons.

Hence Turkey's active participation in the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva and in other United Nations bodies dealing with the prevention of the proliferation and destabilizing accumulation of conventional weapons and small arms. For more effective international control, Turkey encourages transparency in transfers of conventional weapons. In that context, we advocate the expansion of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms to include categories of small arms and light weapons. Turkey also supports similar initiatives within the framework of the Wassenaar Arrangement on export controls for conventional arms and dual-use technologies and of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Notwithstanding the fresh hopes for a safer environment brought about by the end of the cold war, the world has experienced a proliferation of regional conflicts and armed hostilities, and has witnessed a trend towards the spread and destabilizing accumulation of sophisticated weapons systems, including weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The proliferation of those weapons and their means of delivery is a tangible and growing threat facing our nations. Despite efforts by the international community to devise comprehensive and effective arms control and disarmament measures, some countries, albeit few in number, still continue to improve and/or seek to acquire nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and related technologies. Furthermore, progressive improvements in the range and accuracy of ballistic missiles render the threat of proliferation all the more worrying, since they make weapons of mass destruction readily usable. The Middle East and North Africa are home to the highest concentration of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and missile programmes of any region in the world.

In order to understand the rationale behind that high level of proliferation in the Middle East, it would be worthwhile to look at the root causes of the problem from a wider perspective. We observe that in response to the perceived weapons capabilities of the other party or of a neighbour, countries in the region intensify their armament efforts, thus perpetuating a destabilizing vicious circle. Therefore, we are of the opinion that any credible effort aimed at finding a lasting solution to the problem of proliferation in the Middle East must first and foremost address the issue of eradicating all weapons of mass destruction in the region. We believe that arms control agreements and non-proliferation regimes will continue to restrain the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. We consider it extremely important that all countries in that region should sign, ratify and fully implement all international treaties and agreements which aim at preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles.

We are all aware that many of the technologies associated with weapons of mass destruction programmes also have legitimate civilian or military applications. As dual-use technologies and expertise continue to spread internationally, the prospects for nuclear, biological and chemical terrorism are also growing. The relative ease with which such weapons are produced, coupled with the willingness of some States to cooperate with terrorist, extremist or organized-crime groups, increases our concern that such weapons, especially chemical and biological weapons, could end up in unwanted hands.

We observe with concern the ongoing transfers of weapons of mass destruction and missile matériel and technology. If that trend continues, the primary customers for such matériel might themselves become suppliers for other possible proliferators over the next decade. Therefore, we also believe in the need for extreme vigilance in the transfer of sensitive matériel and technology to regions that are of particular concern, such as the Middle East. While the main responsibility for effective international cooperation in the prevention of proliferation lies mainly with supplier countries, countries located on transfer routes should

also shoulder their responsibility and cooperate with suppliers to prevent unauthorized access to such matériel and technologies.

It is Turkey's desire to see all countries in our region and beyond share the goals of non-proliferation and work collectively towards their attainment. After establishing the necessary export control regulations at the national level, Turkey joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group and became a member of the Australian Group. Turkey has also assumed its responsibilities within the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Missile Technology Control Regime and has joined the Zangger Committee. This complements the commitments we have undertaken by virtue of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

As a further manifestation of our non-proliferation policies, we became one of the first signatories of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Turkey is among the 44 countries whose ratification is required for the entry into force of the CTBT. We are fully aware of that special responsibility conferred on us in the service of international non-proliferation efforts, and we did our best to achieve early ratification of the Treaty. The ratification process was completed on 16 December 1999, and our instrument of ratification was deposited with the Secretary-General on 16 February 2000. The backing given to the CTBT by the Turkish Parliament and its rapid ratification are clear testimony to the consensus that prevails in both the legislative and the executive branches in support of national and international efforts designed to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

We believe that the entry into force of the CTBT would be significantly eased through ratification by those countries that have signed the Treaty, and especially by those countries that have tested nuclear weapons in the past. We are of the opinion that the forthcoming Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will provide an appropriate forum for the international community to reaffirm its support for the Treaty.

The effective implementation of the CTBT will certainly be beneficial to the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and to its pillar, the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We consider the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be a landmark of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. The NPT, which establishes a global norm for nuclear non-proliferation with its 187 States parties, is one of the most remarkable treaties of all time. Indeed, considerable progress has been achieved in the field of nuclear disarmament since the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. Indefinite extension of the Treaty made it a permanent feature of the global security edifice. Turkey has all along been an ardent supporter of the NPT and of its lofty goals. We abide strictly by the provisions of the Treaty.

The recent 2000 NPT Review Conference, held at New York, offered the first opportunity to consider in detail the operation of the Treaty since its indefinite extension. We welcome the consensus adoption of the Final Document of that Conference after intense negotiations. Turkey would also like to participate constructively in the preparations for the NPT review process, which will begin in the spring of 2002, with a view to ensuring the success of the next Review Conference, to be held in 2005.

We note with satisfaction that 187 countries have once again confirmed the continuing validity and importance of the nuclear non-proliferation regime as established by the Treaty. We also welcome the reaffirmation by the nuclear-weapon States of their unequivocal commitment to eliminate their nuclear arsenal in accordance with article VI of the Treaty, albeit without a specific timeframe. The provisions of the Final Document regarding further reductions of non-strategic nuclear weapons, increased transparency, and reduction of the operational status of nuclear weapons are all considered by Turkey to be positive steps. In view of our proximity to the Middle East, we attach importance to the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference, which called for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, and which was reaffirmed in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference in the section entitled "Regional issues".

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements concluded freely among States in their respective regions will strengthen both global and regional peace and security. Turkey will continue to support the establishment of such zones wherever possible and feasible. In this context, we welcome the

steps taken by States to conclude further nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties — notably, the initiative launched by Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan in Bishkek in 1998 to establish such a zone in Central Asia. We pledge our full support to this commendable initiative and encourage all nuclear-weapon States to work constructively towards its realization.

The primary role that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays within the framework of the non-proliferation regime is emphasized once more in the Final Document of the last NPT Review Conference. Indeed, this document, adopted by consensus, reflects and reaffirms confidence in the work of the IAEA assigned to it by various articles of the NPT. Turkey has repeatedly stated the importance we attach to the speedy entry into force of the strengthened safeguards measures of the Agency. Accordingly, we have signed the additional protocol to our safeguards agreement and are taking steps for its early ratification.

Turkey believes that the Conference on Disarmament must retain its role as the sole multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament. However, the lack of progress in the Conference for the last three years has been a major cause of disappointment for us. We believe that we should avoid creating the erroneous impression that the Conference on Disarmament is becoming an ineffective body.

We had hoped that the positive outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference would be a source of inspiration at the beginning of the 2001 session. However, our hopes were not realized due to some divergent views on the Conference on Disarmament's programme of work. Although we had come to a point where most of the elements of the programme of work were agreed, two outstanding issues — namely, nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space — required further elaboration. We are of the opinion that this should not prevent us from establishing mechanisms on those items that we have already agreed on, while simultaneously continuing deliberations on other items. The gains achieved so far through a long and difficult process should be maintained.

In view of our geographical location, exposed to the risks of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means, Turkey believes that our urgent duty should now be to make use of every opportunity to move the Conference on Disarmament forward.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is unique among its kind, with its provisions aimed at prohibiting and eliminating an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under strict and effective international verification and control. Since its entry into force, the growth in the number of States party to the Convention is encouraging. Turkey has been a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention since 1997 and is firmly committed to its objectives. We have made the necessary adaptation in our national legislation to meet the requirements of the Convention. Our full compliance with the CWC provisions was reconfirmed during an inspection visit to the facilities of the Aliaga Petrochemical Industries Company last summer. We also try to encourage other countries, especially those in our neighbourhood that have not yet signed or ratified the CWC, to become party to it. Turkey is determined to continue its efforts in the future towards ensuring the non-proliferation of such weapons.

Turkey is fully conscious of the casualties and the ensuing human suffering caused by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of mines. We attach importance to the mine-ban Treaty and consider it to be one of the major achievements of the international community towards the total elimination of anti-personnel mines. However, the security situation around Turkey is distinctly different from that faced by the proponents of the Ottawa process. This has prevented us from signing the Treaty. However, our commitment to the Treaty's goals was manifested by our participation in the First, Second and Third Meetings of the States Parties, held in Maputo, in Geneva and in Managua on 18-21 September 2001. Turkey also put into effect in January 1996 a national moratorium banning the sale and transfer of anti-personnel mines, and in 1998 this moratorium was extended until the year 2002. We have already cleared some 8,000 mines. Furthermore, Turkey has initiated a number of contacts with some neighbouring countries with a view to seeking the establishment of special regimes in order to keep our common borders free of anti-personnel mines. To this end, Turkey concluded bilateral agreements with Bulgaria in March 1999 and with Georgia in January 2001. We have proposed similar projects to Greece and Azerbaijan. Furthermore, Turkey contributed $50,000

for mine clearance activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Turkish troops stationed under the command of the Kosovo Force and the Stabilization Force have participated in these activities. For six consecutive months we funded the expenses of the Albanian Mines Action Committee, carrying out demining activities in the northern border regions of Albania.

I would like to stress once more my Government's determination to become a party to the Ottawa Convention. Our intention to this effect was made public on 6 April 2001, during the visit of the Greek Foreign Minister, Mr. Papandreou, to Turkey. On that occasion, our Foreign Minister, Mr. Cem, and Mr. Papandreou announced that Turkey and Greece would concurrently start the procedures that would make both countries party to the Ottawa Convention. According to the joint statement, Greece will initiate the ratification process of the Convention, and Turkey will start accession procedures. Following these steps, the instruments of ratification will be simultaneously deposited with the United Nations Secretary-General in due course.

Mr. Beyendeza (Uganda): On behalf of the Ugandan delegation, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee. May I also join previous speakers in commending the able manner in which you and the members of your Bureau have so far steered the work of the Committee. My delegation would like to assure you of our full support and cooperation.

My delegation also wishes to express its appreciation to the Department for Disarmament Affairs for the excellent work done in producing and updating documents. In particular, may I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, for his opening statement. Uganda takes seriously the concern pointed out in the Secretary-General's report, in which he expresses the uncertainties about international disarmament cooperation at a time when the need for such cooperation has become more urgent.

Our Committee is meeting at a very crucial time, following the events of 11 September. Uganda has already conveyed its deepest condolences to the relatives and friends of those who perished in the fires of New York and Washington, and we wish a quick recovery to those who were injured and who are now undergoing treatment. As we have stated elsewhere, the attack of 11 September was an attack on the international community. More than 80 nations were involved. This kind of terrorist attack, using all manner of weapons, must be resisted. Uganda wishes to assure the international community that we are solidly behind the fight against terrorism in all its aspects.

The events of 11 September should increase the resolve of the international community to address the challenges we now face in the field of disarmament, with the goal of achieving international peace. Among other things, measures should be taken to strengthen existing agreements aimed at reducing nuclear arsenals and even eliminating them altogether. Tens of thousands of nuclear weapons are stockpiled. We know that one stockpile is already one too many in terms of capability to destroy.

That is why my delegation calls for progress to be made, as soon as possible, on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to enable it to enter into force in order to prevent such materials from ending up in the wrong hands. This is yet another reason why those States that are not yet parties to the Treaty are called upon to accede to it without further delay.

My delegation is disappointed at developments in a number of other areas of disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament ended its third session still unable to agree on a programme of work, thereby undermining the possibility of effective negotiations on nuclear disarmament or fissile materials.

Concerning the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, we are disappointed that — as many delegations have already noted — although the Treaty has been signed by 161 States and ratified by 79, it has not entered into force.

With respect to biological, chemical and other weapons, the picture is no rosier. With the current threat of use of biological weapons, there are no security guarantees that terrorists will not resort to this route to achieve their selfish ends. So far, four Conferences have failed to come to any concrete agreement. My delegation hopes that the Fifth Review Conference of the parties to the Convention, set for 19 November, will be more fruitful and more successful.

My delegation would like to draw the attention of this Committee to yet another area of concern for us:

the flourishing global arms market, which the Under-Secretary-General made reference to in his statement. This flourishing market means increased global military spending, involving billions of dollars in arms transfers. This type of investment has meant that developing countries, especially African ones, have had to divert their resources to acquire arms — especially small arms and light weapons — at the expense of investing in other urgent social and economic development projects which would be more beneficial. My delegation believes that such transfers of resources have a direct bearing on the causes of conflict within our regions and may be responsible for the devastating poverty, crippling diseases and constant instability these areas are currently experiencing.

We therefore need urgently to readjust our priorities, reduce levels of expenditure on armaments and reinvest those resources in programmes that can promote peace, security and development.

In this regard, my delegation last July joined in the overwhelming consensus to adopt a Programme of Action during the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Uganda looks forward to future reviews on this subject, in the hope that the remaining aspects of the question, including the private possession of weapons and the supply of arms to non-State actors, will be addressed.

Uganda will therefore support all those resolutions that call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons and for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We will work with all delegations that are genuinely concerned with the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of biological and toxin weapons and their destruction. Our delegation will support this Committee in its work on the disarmament agenda of the international community in all its aspects.

The Chairman: Consultations are extremely important in our work, but if they are conducted in this room, or in the back of the room, I ask that they be conducted in a more subdued manner.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I shall read out only excerpts from my statement, the full text of which will be circulated.

It is a singular pleasure to see you, an old friend and a respected colleague, presiding over the deliberations of the First Committee during this session. Having worked under your stewardship on the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, I am entirely confident that you will guide the work of this Committee in such a way as to obtain optimum results at this defining moment in world history. I also wish to express Pakistan's sincere appreciation to my friend, Ambassador U Mya Than of Myanmar, for the skilful manner in which he guided this Committee last year.

The Chinese symbol for "crisis" — *wei-ji* — depicts two paradoxical notions: danger and opportunity. The terrorist atrocities of 11 September and their aftermath epitomize the meaning of this pictogram. This tragedy, which hit at the heart of the world's greatest Power, illustrated the threat posed by terrorism in a globalized yet unequal world. It threw into bold relief the new dimensions of international insecurity and instability; it demonstrated the force of fanaticism; and it revealed the breeding grounds for this contemporary evil. These are some of the formidable challenges the world must confront.

Yet this tragedy also offers new opportunities. It has already brought the world's nations together into an international coalition. A body blow is being struck at the most visible manifestations of terrorism, and a sustained campaign has been launched to root out terrorism in its various vicious forms all over the world. It also offers the opportunity to finally bring peace to Afghanistan and relief and reconstruction to its brave and long-suffering people; to promote peace between Pakistan and India; to revive economic and political stability in the region; to address the conflicts and disputes which lie at the root of the anger, frustration and despair that breed the foot soldiers of terrorism; to eradicate poverty, which promotes and exacerbates conflicts and offers the recruits for terrorism; and to foster a dialogue among civilizations for cooperation and coexistence rather than a clash between them.

The 11 September attacks demonstrated that threats to State security can emanate from diverse sources, internal and external, that even the most powerful States are vulnerable to asymmetric threats and that the causes of such threats are complex, as are their consequences. To be durable, national and international security must be constructed comprehensively. The events of 11 September also demonstrated that comprehensive national and

international security can be constructed and preserved only through cooperation among States, not strategic competition or coercion. It is also increasingly evident that multilateral responses, in the security and economic spheres, are more effective than unilateral measures, even those taken by the world's most powerful States. The United Nations is the best instrument for the development and implementation of such multilateral approaches.

Even as we endeavour to evolve a new cooperative security structure, the United Nations Member States can provide momentum and practical content to this process through concrete progress on the identified elements of the global disarmament agenda.

After a brief period of post-cold-war euphoria, it is now widely recognized that the danger posed by nuclear weapons has not diminished. Indeed, it has increased. Nuclear disarmament must therefore retain the highest priority, which the world community has accorded to it over the last five decades.

Nuclear deterrence, so long as it serves strategic stability, should be maintained at the lowest possible level. The two major nuclear Powers continue to shoulder the primary responsibility for achieving further drastic reductions in their present nuclear arsenals. In the first instance, their nuclear weapons should be reduced — unilaterally, bilaterally or plurilaterally — to a level of parity with other nuclear-weapon States. Thereafter, further reductions in nuclear arsenals could be implemented multilaterally.

The nuclear-weapon States recognized under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) have committed themselves to the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons. They should therefore agree to negotiations on nuclear disarmament within the Conference on Disarmament.

Pakistan is also committed to the commencement of the negotiation of a non-discriminatory international treaty for the prohibition of fissile materials designed to promote both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We also believe that talks on negative security assurances within the Conference on Disarmament can help to evolve agreed practical measures to reduce the danger of the use of nuclear weapons and to help counter new and old doctrines which contemplate the actual use of nuclear weapons. The Conference's work in this area could be a useful input to an international conference on reducing nuclear danger.

Three other steps are essential. The first is to evolve a consensus on the relationship between offensive and defensive weapons systems. The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty is widely regarded as a pillar of global strategic stability. A change in the present arrangement — if at all required — should be evolved through a cooperative approach involving all concerned States. Otherwise, it could provoke a new arms race. Similarly, the implications of theatre missile defences for stability in some of the world's most sensitive regions need much greater attention. Pakistan is especially concerned that ABM systems are being introduced into South Asia. These could destabilize the deterrence which presently exists on the subcontinent.

The second step is a concerted endeavour to prevent the spread of the arms race to outer space. This common heritage of mankind can be utilized to enhance international peace and security only within a cooperative framework. Unilateral steps — whether technological or military — will invariably invite responses from other Powers which feel that their security is jeopardized by such steps.

Thirdly, the threat posed by missiles must be addressed within a comprehensive and cooperative framework, responsive to the security concerns of all States. Pakistan has proposed that the item on missiles in all aspects should be added to the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, with a view to negotiating a global treaty. We are participating in the Panel of Governmental Experts, which recommended a fair and comprehensive approach.

However, Pakistan cannot endorse arrangements for selective non-proliferation evolved by States which themselves retain the right to possess missiles while seeking to prevent others from acquiring or developing these even for the purpose of legitimate self-defence and deterrence. We shall be prepared, of course, to consider equitable and practical interim measures designed to reduce missile-related threats at all levels.

The Conference on Disarmament in which all the major national security interests are represented, can continue to serve as an effective mechanism for multilateral nuclear and conventional disarmament. With the demonstration of some flexibility on all sides, agreement can be achieved on a programme of work

for the Conference on the basis of the so-called Amorim proposal.

It is regrettable that a Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) protocol could not be finalized this year. At the forthcoming Fifth BWC Review Conference, the Pakistan delegation will work towards the resumption of negotiations.

Pakistan believes that, so far, insufficient attention has been devoted to the threat to global and regional peace and stability posed by the expansion, proliferation and increasing sophistication of conventional weapons. The widening gap in technological capabilities — encompassed by the so-called revolution in military affairs — and in the disparity of size of military budgets between the rich and the poor, the big and the smaller nations — is increasing the imbalance in conventional force capabilities at the international and regional levels. This escalating asymmetry can generate ambitions of domination and even military conquest. The international community must now address the problem of conventional arms control and disarmament in a comprehensive and credible manner. My delegation suggests that, as a first step, the United Nations or the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) be commissioned to prepare a study, with the participation of governmental experts on this subject. Thereafter, specific further steps could be identified and promoted at the global, regional and national levels.

Although our world has become an interdependent global village, security and disarmament can be promoted most effectively and equitably at the regional level, responding to the specific concerns and characteristics of each region.

The tragedy of 11 September could also open up opportunities for durable peace in South Asia. But there is a more urgent challenge which must be addressed first.

At a time when the world and Pakistan are focused on eliminating terrorism in Afghanistan, the threats from our eastern neighbour of pre-emptive strikes against Pakistan, artillery barrages and troop movements illustrate its desire to exploit the situation to secure concessions on Kashmir. Pakistan hopes that the international community will dissuade our neighbour from recourse to military adventurism or diplomatic coercion. As President Musharraf has stated,

"Pakistan knows how to defend its frontiers".

Any violation of our territory, any aggression, will be met by a firm and fierce response.

At the same time, the new international paradigm also offers an opportunity to build a new and stable security architecture for South Asia. The President of Pakistan has demonstrated that he is prepared to go the extra mile to extend the hand of friendship to India. He took the initiative once again last week to telephone Prime Minister Vajpayee to commiserate with him over the recent terrorist attack in Srinagar and to again invite him to visit Pakistan. We hope that both Prime Minister Vajpayee and Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh will find a mutually convenient date to visit Pakistan for renewed bilateral talks. We believe that while a bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan on Kashmir is essential it is not a sufficient condition to resolve the dispute. Bilateral negotiations, on various issues, between the two countries have never yielded an agreement, since our neighbour has always tried to use its larger size to seek unequal solutions. We share the view that the constitution of the international coalition against terrorism offers new opportunities to promote a just and peaceful solution to the Kashmir dispute.

Pakistan believes that we can also advance the goal of building a new security architecture for South Asia. We have outlined our concept of a strategic restraint regime involving nuclear restraint, conventional arms balance and a political mechanism for the resolution of mutual disputes and conflicts, including Kashmir.

To promote nuclear restraint and prevent the use of nuclear weapons, Pakistan suggests that the two countries agree: first, to formalize their respective unilateral nuclear-test moratoriums, perhaps through a bilateral treaty; secondly, not to operationally weaponize nuclear-capable missile systems; thirdly, not to operationally deploy nuclear-capable ballistic missiles, and to keep them on de-alert; fourthly, to formalize the previous understanding to provide prior and adequate notification of flight tests of missiles; fifthly, to observe a moratorium on the acquisition, deployment or development of anti-ballistic missile systems; sixthly, to implement further confidence-building and transparency measures to reduce the risk

of the use of nuclear weapons by miscalculation or accident; seventhly, to open discussions on the nuclear security doctrines of the two countries with a view to forestalling an all-out nuclear arms race; and, eighthly, to conclude an agreement on non-use of force, including non-use of nuclear weapons.

We hope that the international community will help both Pakistan and India to promote such measures for mutual nuclear restraint and provide technical advice and support to enhance the safety and security of South Asia's nuclear weapons.

The maintenance of a conventional balance between Pakistan and India is vital to ensure nuclear stability in the region. During the past decade Pakistan's conventional capabilities have been considerably eroded due to one-sided sanctions, while our neighbour has been relentlessly pursuing a major conventional arms build-up. Almost all its military assets are deployed against Pakistan. Therefore, a significant conventional imbalance will inevitably further increase Pakistan's reliance on the nuclear dimension of deterrence. The international community must discourage India's massive military acquisitions. Profits from arms sales cannot compensate for the enhanced danger of war in a nuclearized South Asia.

The aim of peace, stability and mutual restraint in South Asia will remain elusive so long as our eastern neighbour maintains its quest for a great-Power role and domination over its neighbours. Pakistan will not accept hegemony from within, or outside, South Asia. But we are prepared for cooperation as sovereign equals, in accordance with the new realities of a world where the principal national objectives of States can be achieved through economic and political cooperation, rather than military conquest or regional or global domination.

Mr. Al-Banai (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of my country, I take great pleasure in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are convinced that your experience is the best guarantee we could possibly have for a successful outcome to our work. I would also like to express my gratitude to your predecessor for the outstanding way in which he guided the work of the First Committee during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, and to extend our congratulations to all the other members of the Bureau on their election. We reiterate our readiness to cooperate in the best interests of our work.

I also wish to reaffirm before the First Committee Kuwait's solidarity with the people and Government of the United States of America, who have experienced extremely trying times as a result of the horrifying terrorist attacks that struck New York and Washington on 11 September. I assure them that we share their grief and their determination. Those crimes were committed not only against the people of the United States, but also against the nationals of 80 other countries. Our condolences go out to each and every one of the families and friends of the victims. Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) provides the best way to deal with this issue, as it reflects the determination of the entire international family to wipe out terrorism once and for all.

In recent days we have heard a number of statements which, although couched in different language, invariably agreed that there is a common political will to move towards a non-nuclear world. This is a reaffirmation of the Final Document adopted at the 1998 special session devoted to disarmament. At that time, disarmament efforts carried top priority. Hopes have risen since the end of the cold war that we might actually see a world governed by peace, security and stability. Yet that desire has not been fully achieved, neither in terms of relinquishing nuclear stockpiles nor with regard to the development of dangerous weapons of mass destruction.

The spectre of nuclear war continues to haunt the world. Nuclear weapons continue to be developed and to spread, in contravention of International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards regime.

Nuclear-weapon States have still not agreed on how to resolve that problem. They have not begun, even gradually, to relinquish their stockpiles of weapons. Keeping such dangerous weapons is no longer an option. Indeed, world leaders, gathered together at the Millennium Summit, committed themselves to doing away with weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. Above and beyond that undertaking, agreements were entered into in May 2000 among the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) that envisaged practical measures designed to achieve nuclear disarmament on a methodical and gradual basis.

Kuwait considers that there can be no justification whatever for any State to hold on to its weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. We reiterate the appeals made by peoples and Governments throughout the world for States to renounce such weapons. We hope that those appeals will be heeded and that the States concerned will be wise enough to eliminate their weapons. We must remind the nuclear-weapon States of their responsibility not to encourage or help non-nuclear States to join their ranks by manufacturing or stockpiling such weapons or by establishing facilities for their production. We would also like to remind them of the July 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice regarding the illegality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons in resolving conflict.

In this regard, I would like to reiterate the fact that my country supports the Secretary-General's proposal to convene an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. Such a proposal was included in the Declaration adopted by the heads of State or Government during the Millennium Summit. A year has gone by since then, yet, unfortunately, neither the NPT nor the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has achieved universality or entered into force. Indeed, global military expenditures continue to grow, as does the illicit traffic in weapons, growing at a rate equal to or higher than the economic growth of any country. Even we in this Committee are still unable to reach agreement on our agenda, and continue to be paralysed on the issue of creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. There are many other such problems that I could detail, but I shall say no more on that subject.

These concerns, which are felt by most peoples around the world, have led to a general sense of pessimism. The simple fact is that certain States are continuing to pursue their own selfish interests at the expense of international peace and security. Instead of helping the world to focus all its efforts on eliminating poverty and achieving sustainable development, last year alone countries throughout the world spent $800 billion on arming themselves with weapons of all kinds. Where is the wisdom and justice in that?

We in Kuwait are devoting particular attention to efforts to do away with weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, in our part of the world, the Middle East. We are doing so through our involvement in efforts undertaken by the League of Arab States in accordance with the provisions of the relevant resolutions adopted by the Council of the League at its 101st session in September last year, calling for making the Middle East a zone free of all types of weapons of mass destruction.

Although all Arab States are signatories to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, this has not ensured even a minimum of protection and security because of the threat posed by Israel's nuclear weapons and the fact that that country flagrantly flouts international resolutions. Repeated appeals have been made by the international community, but Israel remains the only State in our region that has not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — despite the fact that ours is one of the most sensitive regions of the world — thus creating a clear imbalance in military power and posing a great threat to international peace and security. The Israeli Government must renounce its nuclear arsenal and submit its nuclear facilities to the IAEA safeguards regime. We call upon States not to provide scientific or technological aid that might help Israel build up its nuclear forces, which continue to be a source of concern in the Middle East.

The pretext advanced by Israel flatly contradicts its expressed desire for peace. Peace must be built upon confidence; it cannot be built upon arms used against innocent civilians, including children.

I should like once again to refer to the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, the first special session devoted to disarmament, which called upon the international community to take steps against nuclear proliferation and to renounce weapons of mass destruction, including those held for deterrent purposes. We in Kuwait are thoroughly familiar with the dangers of weapons of mass destruction; our bitter experience is the result of the fact that our northern neighbour, Iraq, used such weapons against us. The spectre of such Iraqi weapons continues to haunt the entire international community. Indeed, inspection efforts over the past 10 years have shown that Iraq continues its non-compliance with resolutions of international legitimacy and ignores issues related to disarmament. In fact, it has used weapons of mass destruction against its own people.

I would like to draw the attention of members to paragraph 31 of the report (A/56/1) of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, which states that Iraq is not abiding by the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1284 (1999), which affirms the obligation of the Government of Iraq to cooperate with the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission in enabling inspections of weapons of mass destruction. There has been no such cooperation by Iraq, and its weapons of mass destruction programmes are continuing. Furthermore, Iraq has not cooperated with the International Committee of the Red Cross and its efforts over the past 10 years to resolve the issue of prisoners and detainees of war.

In a letter dated 5 October 2001 to the President of the Security Council, contained in document S/2001/945, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency stated:

> "For nearly three years, the Agency has not been in a position to implement its mandate in Iraq under Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and related resolutions. As a consequence, it is not able at present to provide any assurance that Iraq is in compliance with its obligations under these resolutions."

There can be no doubt that the comments of both the Secretary-General and the Director General of the IAEA demonstrate the invalidity of Iraq's claims that it has abided by its commitments with regard to section C of resolution 687 (1991).

Humankind has known the horrors of two world wars and is still suffering their consequences. We hope that we will not see a third world war — particularly a nuclear war. We must focus on what binds us together, on what we have in common, rather than on what divides us or is controversial. Future generations will not be able to pardon us if we fail in this regard.

Our hopes, prayers and expectations in Kuwait are for the new century to be devoid of the wounds and crimes of the past. In the twentieth century we had bitter experiences with regional and civil wars that have destabilized countries, taken millions of innocent lives and hampered development in many parts of the world. We hope that future generations will not have to endure the reality of terms such as "war", "prisoner of war", "genocide", "suppression", and "terrorism" and other evils.

Mr. Tekle (Eritrea): Allow me to seize this opportunity, on behalf of the Eritrean delegation, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this Committee. Allow me also to congratulate your colleagues in the Bureau.

I am confident that with your rich experience and diplomatic skills you will guide our deliberations to a successful conclusion. Let me assure you of the Eritrean delegation's cooperation and support as you fulfil your duties.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to convey sincere congratulations to Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the United Nations staff on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2001.

I should also like to take this opportunity to express sincere appreciation and thanks to your predecessor for the excellent manner in which he performed as chairperson of this Committee during the previous session.

My delegation also wishes to extend thanks and appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala for his comprehensive presentation of the major issues to be discussed in this Committee and for his commitment to the cause of disarmament and international peace and security.

We meet in the tragic aftermath of a senseless and barbaric aggression by international terrorism against the people of the United States and the cold-blooded murder of thousands of citizens from over 60 Member States of the United Nations. We extend our deepest condolences and sympathy to their respective Governments and their bereaved families. Once again, the Eritrean Government condemns the barbarity without any reservation.

Two years into the new millennium a pall of pessimism seems to have replaced the euphoria and the hope that had pervaded the world after the end of the cold war. Today, the international community is confronted by, on the one hand, daunting new problems and challenges and, on the other, continues to be haunted by problems that have bedevilled it for decades. Today aggression, intervention, interference in the internal affairs of other States, occupation of other countries' territories by force, irredentism, racism and the threat or actual use of force, which had been considered relics of the past, manifest themselves along with rampant terrorism and other new forms of

violence, deportations, ethnic cleansing, genocide and massive violations of human rights.

It is true that during the past year the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) adopted an action plan under which nuclear-weapon States undertook to totally eliminate their nuclear arms. It is also true that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects also came out with fresh developments.

On the other hand, there were also attempts to turn the clock back in respect of matters in which humanity had achieved great victories, even during the cold war. The last year has, in particular, been a source of worry and frustration in the field of arms control and disarmament. The threat of nuclear weapons has once again become real, as the effort to achieve non-proliferation has been frustrated. The adoption of unjustifiable strategic doctrines and policies, the unrestrained development and stockpiling of old and new nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as the forging of new alliances, have made the threat to peace real.

The problem is compounded by the fact that, as a result of such new attitudes, important negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament have been deadlocked during the past three years. The NPT Preparatory Committee has not been able to formulate meaningful recommendations on the basis of the 13 steps agreed to during the 2000 Review Conference. It was also not possible to conclude a protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The continued lack of progress has not only negatively impacted on international, and particularly regional, peace, security and stability, but is also undermining the credibility of, and confidence in, those United Nations and other multilateral agencies that are actively engaged in these negotiations. There is thus the need to urgently undertake a thorough assessment of the situation with a view to achieving a proper focus on new approaches and setting new priorities regarding the issues at hand.

If the situation is bleak, however, it certainly is not desperate, and it should be possible to turn the tide and return to the profitable route of arms control and disarmament if, inter alia, we were to heed the advice of the Secretary-General and fully utilize the disarmament machinery in the United Nations system, if agreement were to be reached on the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, which would enable us to establish universal goals for the near future, and if a Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty were to be universally accepted. To this end, we urge all nuclear-weapon States, as well as the nuclear-weapon-capable States in all regions to engage themselves in bona fide negotiations that will enable the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Government of Eritrea is convinced that the question of security becomes more relevant and meaningful to many of our countries only in the context of the overwhelming socio-economic problems and immense structural changes that threaten our peoples.

It is no longer possible to address disarmament and international peace and security issues in any way meaningful to the overwhelming majority of humanity without linking them to issues related to the rising levels of poverty, destabilizing migration flows and the displacement of population, as well as food shortages, malnutrition and famine, declining public health and education, intensifying terrorism and criminal violence. These current problems can be resolved not by old-fashioned state-centric approaches but by focusing and concentrating on communities.

The Eritrean Government is also convinced, more than ever before, that it would be futile to define national security narrowly in view of the catastrophe that took place on 11 September. It must be recognized that the concepts of the indivisibility, interdependence and inter-relatedness of humanity have acquired a new meaning in which not only our cooperation, but also our vulnerability, has assumed international dimensions. It is now certain that we are one in our vulnerability. It is equally certain that we must be one in our stand and resolve. Our close cooperation becomes urgent when it is realized that a small group of terrorists can actually possess weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, biological and chemical ones, and destroy large areas of the world and millions of innocent people with wilful abandon, senselessly and indiscriminately. In this connection, the need to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention with a verification and compliance regime becomes all the more evident.

It is on the basis of these premises that the Eritrean delegation shares the repeated expressions of concern by the Secretary-General, heeds his warning about the grave dangers posed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and supports his appeals against uncontrolled sales of and illicit traffic in these weapons.

The ease with which these weapons can be purchased and transferred is a matter of serious concern in many regions of the world, including the Horn of Africa, if only because such arms have been responsible for about 90 per cent of the deaths in conflicts. Women and children constitute eighty per cent of the casualties, signifying that non-combatants have been the most vulnerable targets. At present, these arms, in fact, not only have become threats to national and regional peace, security and stability but also pose grave dangers to the socio-economic development of many countries, particularly the least-developed countries, including those countries of the Horn of Africa. None of these countries can afford the massive drain on their resources caused by such squandering in an unjustifiable arms race.

The Government of Eritrea recognizes the importance of the need to approach the challenges posed by the proliferation and accessibility of small arms and light weapons at the regional level. To this end, it has attempted to forge a consensus within the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) that would serve as the basis for a meaningful programme to control the further spreading of these arms in the Horn of Africa. No consensus has yet been forged because of the intransigence of one of the States, whose destabilization policies, including the supply of weapons to dissident elements, terrorists and mercenaries, as well as military interventions, continue unchecked to the detriment of the peace, security and stability of the other States of the region, notably Somalia.

The Eritrean delegation is for this reason convinced of the urgent need to establish an internationally sanctioned set of rules, standards and guidelines that can effectively regulate the reduction of stockpiles and check the trafficking of these weapons, particularly at the regional level. It is dismayed by the inconclusive results of the Conference on small arms and light weapons held in July 2001 and welcomes the urgent convening of another conference in the near future.

The Eritrean delegation acknowledges with thanks the important role played so far by the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, including the Centre in Africa, in the promotion of dialogue on peace, disarmament and development issues at the regional and subregional levels. They have truly contributed much to promote arms control, confidence-building and trust among States.

The issue of landmines has a historically emotive place in Eritrean history because its citizens have been victims of these infernal weapons ever since the beginning of their liberation struggle. Although we did not accede to the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines until recently, we have scrupulously adhered to the humanitarian principles enshrined in its provisions because they had — long before the writing of the Convention — already constituted the core values and guiding principles of the struggle. This is a proud record that has been attested to by third parties.

One of the first agencies established as a matter of priority immediately after the liberation of our country was the Eritrean Demining Agency. This agency performed remarkably in spite of the meagre resources and minimal external assistance at its disposal. Its demining activities, as well as its training and mine-awareness programmes, have enabled thousands of our displaced population to resettle in their homes, farms and grazing lands.

Unfortunately, Eritrean fields have once again been massively mined by an irresponsible and brutal Government that is a signatory to the Convention. Peasants who have fled their homes cannot return because a heartless enemy, with the criminal intent of preventing them from quickly returning to a normal life, has refused to provide complete maps of the areas it has mined.

Once again, it becomes evident that the signing of conventions alone will not eliminate landmines. It only makes a mockery of the principle of *pacta sunt servanda*. It therefore becomes urgent for the international community to assemble rules, guidelines and mechanisms, based on lessons learned, for restraining and sanctioning irresponsible Governments. The Convention will become a dead letter without sanctions to enforce respect for it and to punish first users, since their victims will have no alternative but to

use those weapons when, as in the case of Eritrea, they are victimized by irresponsible Governments.

In conclusion, the Eritrean delegation wishes to emphasize again that the commitment to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction — including nuclear, biological and chemical weapons — and of conventional weapons, as well as the search for peace and cooperative relations, cannot and must not be seen in isolation from the need to alleviate poverty and deprivation and to respect human rights. Humanity must not tire or despair in its relentless search for a human environment free of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Paclisanu (International Committee of the Red Cross): This is the first time we are addressing the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We could not call ourselves a humanitarian organization if, before delivering our statement, we did not pause briefly to think about the thousands of people who lost their lives on 11 September in this city of New York, and to think about the many more thousands who survive in pain and grief.

In the next eight weeks, two important review conferences on global arms treaties will be held in Geneva, relating to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention. These are of fundamental importance in assuring that the customary rules of international humanitarian law governing the choice of weapons are faithfully applied to specific weapons likely to have indiscriminate effects and cause suffering beyond military necessity or which simply are abhorrent.

The Second Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) will convene in Geneva on 11 December. This Conference provides a unique opportunity to extend the Convention's protection of both civilians and combatants to non-international armed conflicts and to launch a process aimed at addressing the grave humanitarian problems caused by explosive remnants of war. By extending the scope of application of the Convention to non-international armed conflicts, States parties will make clear that the rules of the Convention should be the minimum standards for all armed conflicts, including, of course, those of an internal nature, which are most prevalent today.

Over the past two years, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has sought to document and raise awareness of the global humanitarian problem caused by explosive remnants of war. Virtually all armed conflicts in modern times have left explosive remnants of war in their wake. Unexploded submunitions, artillery shells, bombs, landmines, booby traps and even missiles often remain after the end of hostilities for national authorities and local civilian populations to deal with — most of the time alone. In many instances, these munitions remain for decades and inflict severe human costs.

Military experts recognize that munitions that fail to explode on impact are of no military value whatsoever and, in fact, impede military operations. According to them, the scale of humanitarian problems caused by explosive remnants of war is, moreover, likely to grow dramatically in the future with the increased ability to rapidly deliver large amounts of ordnance over greater distances. This means, in other words, that even conflicts lasting a few days can leave huge numbers of unexploded munitions. Protracted conflicts can, of course, be expected to cause even more massive damage.

The ICRC therefore urges States parties to agree, at the upcoming Review Conference, on a mandate for a group of governmental experts to begin negotiations towards a new protocol on explosive remnants of war. It should be completed within a timeframe which reflects the urgency of the situation. Such a protocol should address a variety of issues based on the principles already contained in the CCW and its protocols. These include the responsibility for clearing or providing assistance for clearance of unexploded munitions; provision of technical information to facilitate clearance; provision of warnings to civilian populations; and, in the case of sub-munitions, a prohibition of their use against any military objective located within a concentration of civilians.

The Committee also takes this opportunity to encourage States which are not yet party to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to adhere to that important instrument in the near future and to participate in the Review Conference. The ICRC also invites parties to the CCW to take note of a report it has submitted on the production and proliferation of 12.7 mm multi-purpose bullets. The document highlights the Committee's concern that the proliferation of such bullets, which can explode within

the human body, will undermine respect for the 1868 St. Petersburg Declaration. That instrument of customary international law prohibits explosive bullets so as to protect combatants from inevitable death or extreme suffering, which serve no military necessity. States are therefore encouraged to review their ammunition procurement policies in this light.

The Fifth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) should strongly reaffirm the long-standing public abhorrence of the use of any form of biological weapon by any party to a conflict for any purpose whatsoever. It should also reaffirm the international community's total rejection of this form of warfare, as contained in both the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the BWC itself. States parties are urged, at the upcoming Review Conference, to spare no effort to strengthen the BWC. This is particularly urgent to ensure that rapid advances in the fields of microbiology, genetic engineering and biotechnology are used to benefit humanity and are not turned against it.

The September meeting in Managua of States parties to the Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines was an important occasion to take stock of the process of universalization and implementation of that unique treaty, as well as to encourage efforts to create a zone free of anti-personnel mines in Central America. The ICRC welcomes the steady increase in adherence to that instrument, which now stands at 122 States parties.

The Committee encourages all States which have not yet done so to adhere to that instrument, which represents the only effective solution to the global epidemic of landmine injuries. It is greatly encouraged by the fact that, in countries where the Convention's comprehensive programme of mine action is being pursued, the annual number of new mine victims has fallen dramatically. As a result largely of resources mobilized through the Convention, the ICRC has, since 1997, been able to triple the number of mine-awareness programmes and to double the number of patients receiving orthopaedic appliances to some 28,000 last year. Ongoing ICRC medical or surgical assistance for war-wounded currently extends to some 150 hospitals, some of which are in 20 mine-affected countries.

The July United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was an important step in drawing attention to the enormous human costs of the unregulated availability of small arms and light weapons. It is important that the Conference acknowledged that this trade

> "undermines respect for international humanitarian law, impedes the provision of humanitarian assistance to victims of armed conflict and fuels crime and terrorism". (*A/CONF.192/15, part IV, I, para. 5*)

It is equally important that States undertook to put in place a wide range of national measures to combat this trade. The ICRC now calls on States to urgently enact the agreed upon measures. States are likewise invited to review their laws and policies governing the transfer of arms and ammunition with a view to preventing access by those who are likely to violate international humanitarian law.

Lastly, we would like to reaffirm that the ICRC, the 177 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their International Federation are committed to long-term work to raise awareness of the humanitarian implications of unregulated arms availability, while at the same time continuing efforts to end the scourge of landmines and other explosive remnants of war.

The Chairman: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Mahmoud (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Kuwaiti delegation has made its usual claims about Iraq. This is no surprise to us, especially coming as it does from a country that is pursuing ongoing daily aggression against Iraq. It allows British and American aircraft to bomb Iraq over the no-fly zones extending from the Kuwaiti border, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission, contained in document S/2001/913. This aggression has killed innocent civilians, in violation of the United Nations Charter and resolutions of international legitimacy. As the Secretary-General notes, the no-fly zones are illegal.

On this occasion, my delegation wishes once again to reiterate that Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction, as indicated in some official documents of the Organization. We are ready and willing to discuss this matter with any delegation that wishes to have information and documentation proving our point. That

is what Iraq did during its dialogue with the Secretary-General.

As for what the Kuwaiti delegation calls "prisoners", let me stress that it would be better to use the term employed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): Kuwaiti "missing persons". The exchange of prisoners was among the terms of the 1991 ceasefire. Iraq has met its commitment in that regard, as the International Committee of the Red Cross has indicated. Here, we call upon Kuwait to respond to the call by the League of Arab States and by Iraq to sit down with Iraq to resolve the issue of Iraqi and Kuwaiti missing persons, and not to politicize this matter.

As we enter the twenty-first century, we call upon Kuwait to reconsider its aggressive policies towards Iraq and to desist from spreading false allegations and erroneous claims.

We are here in this international forum to discuss matters related to disarmament. Our goal is a noble one — nobler than name-calling and accusations: the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Al-Banai (Kuwait): I apologize for taking the floor once again; it is not my intention to waste the Committee's time. But I cannot sit here and listen to the representative of Iraq level accusations at my country for absolutely no reason. The issue here is an issue of credibility. Had Iraq fulfilled all that is required of it by Security Council resolutions, the Council would not be engrossed in dealing with the issue of Iraq. All we did was state the facts. What we said was what the Secretary-General stated in his annual report on the work of the Organization (A/56/1). And what we said was what the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) stated in a letter (S/2001/945, enclosure) to the President of the Security Council just two weeks ago, reaffirming that Iraq has not fulfilled its obligations under Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and all other relevant resolutions.

As for the prisoners of war, had we intended to politicize that issue we would have done so a long time ago. But the importance of the issue lies in the fact that the Security Council has issued nine presidential statements requiring Iraq to commence cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), with the Tripartite Commission and with His Excellency Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov, whom the Secretary-General has appointed to follow up this issue.

I would like to reaffirm once again that Kuwait does not intend to waste the Committee's time, and only stated the facts with regard to disarmament.

Mr. Mahmoud (Iraq): With reference to what the representative of Kuwait has said, we referred in our speech yesterday to the documents, which clearly say that Iraq has fulfilled its obligations. What the Kuwaiti delegation refers to has still not been proved credible, especially in the light of the politicization of the issue in the Security Council.

I turn now to the question of missing Kuwaitis, to which the representative of Kuwait has referred. As the representative of Iraq said, he is always ready to sit with Kuwait and discuss this issue, and to discuss the issue with countries that truly have missing persons. Iraq has done so: we did so last year with Saudi Arabia, and were able successfully to resolve a missing persons file. So, we call again on Kuwait, as the League of Arab States has done, to cooperate with Iraq on this question and to resolve the question of missing Iraqis and Kuwaitis.

Mr. Al-Banai (Kuwait): Once again, I apologize for taking the floor. Kuwait has been ready to talk with regard to our missing prisoners of war in the forums that international legality has put forward: the Tripartite Commission and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). It is not we who, for more than three years, have boycotted the meetings of the ICRC dealing with this issue. It is Iraq that has consistently refused to attend those meetings, thus using this purely humanitarian issue as a political card. It is not we.

The Chairman: We have heard the last speaker in the debate, and have thus concluded our general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items.

Organization of work

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Nepal.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): We are very well aware that there are deadlines to be met, and we certainly have to be aware of time limitations. Only yesterday, the Chairman reminded us that we are approaching the second phase of our work and that draft resolutions

were to be submitted to the Secretariat by 6 p.m. tomorrow, 18 October. But so far, the negotiations among the sponsors of certain draft resolutions indicate that we still need a little more time.

I wish therefore to appeal for an extension of the deadline by at least one day, until 6 p.m. Friday, 19 October. That would certainly facilitate the adoption of draft resolutions. We know we are under time pressures, but I think this is a reasonable request.

The Chairman: Does the representative of Nepal have in mind the specific draft resolution on which his delegation is working, or is this a general suggestion?

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): Yes, I have a specific draft resolution in mind. It relates to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific.

The reason I am taking up this issue is that my Government is going to sign a host country agreement with the United Nations, and we are trying to finalize the timetable as to when we can sign it. We have an indication from the Department concerned that it could be signed tomorrow, but in case we need a few hours more, we would just like to ask if the deadline could be extended by at least one day. I think the problem would then be resolved. This is because in the resolution that we are intending to introduce, there will be a reference to the signature of the host country agreement concerning the relocation of the Centre to Kathmandu.

We are making a great effort to meet the deadline. Taking into account our situation, the Committee will, I hope, consider our request positively.

The Chairman: Let me just enumerate a couple of points, three or four points of which members of the Committee are aware, but I still think it would be important to reiterate them.

We will start the second phase of our work, as you know, on Monday, 22 October. Document A/C.1/56/CRP.2 has been distributed for easy reference in order to see how the structure of the discussion will go.

I also would like to urge delegations to inscribe their names on the list of speakers for the particular subject they would like to address, if possible.

Finally, I come to the issue of the deadline for submission of draft resolutions on all disarmament and international security agenda items. The deadline is Thursday, 18 October 2001, at 6.00 p.m. I would then make a departure from this deadline in light of the request just presented to us by the representative of Nepal for the specific draft resolution on which he is working. I understand his objective reasons, but I would like to ask the delegation not to construe this very generous concession from the Chair as a precedent for others. So, as far as the representative of Nepal is concerned, we understand the difficulties he might be encountering. I count very much on his draft coming to the Chair by Friday, but I would reiterate that the deadline for the submission of drafts is 18 October at 6.00 p.m., and I would like to ask for the cooperation and understanding of delegations to abide by this deadline.

If this seems to be agreeable — I mean here, obviously, the reference made to our colleague from Nepal — I would take it that he has an extra day to work on his specific draft resolution.

Now, I have also been requested to remind delegations and other participants in the First Committee that they are all invited by the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Global Security Institute to a discussion this afternoon with Mr. Robert MacNamara, former United States Secretary of Defense, on the theme "Lessons for today from the Cuban missile crisis". The discussion will be held today at 3.00 p.m. in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library auditorium.

I also have an announcement by our Secretary of the Committee, to whom I give the floor.

The Secretary of the Committee: I would like to remind the delegations concerned that the Group of Experts on First Committee matters of the Group of African States will hold a meeting this morning in this conference room immediately after the adjournment of the meeting of the First Committee.

The Chairman: The next meeting of the First Committee will be held on Monday, 22 October 2001, at 10.00, in this conference room. Please make use of the two remaining days of the week as efficiently as possible.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.